

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 L-03

CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 DODE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00

INRE-00 MC-02 ACDA-07 IGA-02 OMB-01 TRSE-00 /059 W

-----281329Z 086841 /40

R 271646Z MAY 77

FM AMEMBASSY MANAGUA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3305

S E C R E T MANAGUA 2504

FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY TODMAN FROM AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, PFOR, NU

SUBJECT: PRESIDENT SOMOZA ON STATE OF SIEGE AND ARMS SALES TO
NICARAGUA

REF: STATE 121562

1. DURING WIDE-RANGING AND VERY CORDIAL DISCUSSION WITH PRESIDENT SOMOZA MAY 26, WE RAISED QUESTION OF GOVERNMENT PLANS FOR ENDING THE STATE OF SIEGE. SOMOZA SAID THAT HE HOPED TO LIFT SATE OF SIEGE SOME TIME IN JUNE AFTER SUPREME COURT HAD ACTED ON PENDING MILITARY COURT APPEALS. WE TOLD SOMOZA THAT IT WOULD BE TAKEN AS A POSITIVE STEP BY THE U.S. GOVERNMENT AND COULD PROVE HELPFUL IN ELICITING MORE FAVORABLE ATTITUDE TOWARDS NICARAGUA IN THE U.S. CONGRESS.

2. THE PRESIDENT CONVEYED HIS DEEP CONCERN OVER THE DEPARTMENT'S REFUSAL TO APPROVE APPLICATIONS FOR THE COMMERCIAL SALE OF ARMS AND AMMUNITION TO NICARAGUA. HE SAID THIS AMOUNTED TO AN EMBARGO OF ARMS TRANSACTION WITH A FRIENDLY GOVERNMENT AND WAS VIEWED WITH UTMOST SERIOUSNESS AND DISQUIET BY HIS GOVERNMENT. HE ADDED THAT COMMERCIAL SALES HAD NEVER BEEN PROHIBITED BY THE U.S. GOVERNMENT EVEN WHEN DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WERE SUSPENDED IN 1947. HE REPEATED HIS EARLIER CHARACTERIZATION OF SUCH A DECISION AS A HOSTILE ACT.

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WE EXPLAINED TO SOMOZA THAT THE MATTER WAS UNDER REIVIEW BY THE DEPARTMENT AND A CLARIFCATION OF U.S. POLICY WAS EXPECTED TO BE FORTHCOMING SOON.

3. SOMOZA ASKED ME TO COMMUNICATE TO PRESIDENT CARTER HIS ADMIRA-TION FOR HIS QUOTE OUTSTANDING AND BRILLIANT UNQUOTE FOREIGN POLICY SPEECH DELIVERED AT UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME. HE SAID IT CLEARED

UP A NUMBER OF ISSUES FOR HOM AND PRESENTED A BALANCED VIEW OF THE ADMINISTRATION'S FOREIGN POLICY.

4. COMMENT: PRESIDENT SOMOZA WAS IN EXCEPTIONALLY GOOD SPIRITS. HE WAS EXTREMELY FRIENDLY AND ONLY WHEN THE DEPARTMENT'S RESTRICTION ON COMMERCIAL ARMS SALES WAS DISCUSSED DID HE BECOME SERIOUS. HE SHOWED SYMPATHETIC UNDERSTANDING OF OUR HUMAN RIGHTS POLICY AND FELT THAT NICARAGUA WAS NOT BEING SINGLED OUT FOR PUNITIVE TREATMENT BY THE U.S. CONGRESS. HE SEEMS TO HAVE ADOPTED A LONG-RANGE PERSPECTIVE ON HIS RELATIONS WITH THE UNITED STATES. HE HAS REFUSED TO BE DRAWN INTO STRIDENT PUBLIC REACTION AGAINST US, AND FEELS HIS POSITION IS STRONG ENOUGH IN NICARAGUA TO RIDE OUT THE STORM. HE SHOWED NO SIGNS OF BEING WORRIED ABOUT THE DETERIORATION OF HIS RELATIONS WITH THE CATHOLIC CHURCH WHEN HE POINTED OUT TO ME HAD OCCURRED BEFORE. SOMOZA MAY BE MISJUDGING THE EXTENT OF THE CHURCH'S ALIENATION AND THE RISKS THIS ENTAILS FOR THE GON. IN ANY EVENT, HE EXUDED CONFIDENCE IN HIS ABILITY TO HANDLE BOTH THE EXTERNAL AND INTERNAL CHALLENGES TO HIS REGIME.
THEBERGE

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Message Attributes

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Decaption Note:
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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
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